

## Don't look back in anger

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# Don't look back in anger

by [grasstastic](#)

## Summary

"*PHIL!*" He screeches, hoping against hope that his cries aren't lost amidst the tree trunks. "PHIL HE'S GONNA KILL ME--"

"Tommy!" Dream yells behind him, as pain erupts across Tommy's side, and warmth soaks his shirt.

Howling. The wolves are howling. The scent of blood is on the air, and all Tommy hears is the wolves.

Technoblade stands just a few feet ahead, face hardened and cold, crossbow in hand— pointed directed at Tommy's face.

The air leaves his chest.

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AU where it was Techno, not Phil that Tommy ran to after Dream escaped prison.

Or

How I'm coping with Techno's loss

## Notes

I'm sorry I've been absent for the last month or so. I knew that I wanted to keep writing after Techno's news, but I had difficulty deciding where to go next, because posting as normal immediately didn't feel right. I wanted to take time to write something specifically more Techno-centered, and this is what I landed on.

It wasn't my first attempt, or my first idea, but it's the one I stuck with, because it encompasses what Techno's character meant for me, and others. In this fic, and all of my writing, Techno's character and his symbols are used as a personification of protection, justice, and indirectly displayed love. I don't think I could ever do the CC justice, but I looked up to him so much, I miss him everyday, and I hope he's resting easy now.

*“Tommy!”*

The name rings out behind him, half-absorbed by the snow beneath their feet.

Tommy is gasping for air after running so far, the cold of the tundra feeling like knives grating against his lungs.

He doesn’t even have enough breath to beg for mercy— not that Dream would grant it anyways.

He’s reliving all his worst memories at once, and the fear of it might just kill him. If Dream doesn’t kill him first, that is.

Being hunted down, running from exile, the cold danger of the tundra, *Dream*.

Snow up to his knees, a wind that cuts him to the bone, the impending threat of frostbite that hangs heavier and heavier with every step he takes into the frozen wasteland.

Tommy had (almost) successfully blocked out the memory of his first trip through this biome, feverish and starving, dressed only in rags that did nothing to stop the cold from taking a limb.

And now the experience is crashing over him once more, exacerbated by the unequivocal terror that burns in his veins, squeezes his chest, rings in his ears—

“Tommy!” His hunter croons from the trees behind him. A fearful sob rips through him— he’s *so* much closer than Tommy thought he was.

He stumbles over the tree roots that curl over the frozen ground, and plants a hand on the ice to push himself up and keep going. He can't fall, can't falter, or it'll be the end of him. Temporarily, at least. Dream promised to bring him back, no matter how much revival hurts.

Tommy spares a glance over his shoulder and catches sight of the tell-tale glint enchanted netherite carries. He makes a fearful noise, and Dream *laughs*.

His heart beats so forcefully in his chest that Tommy wonders how it hasn't given out yet. Surely there's a point where it can't go any faster, can't keep up with the absolute terror flooding his body.

"*Stop!*" He begs, choking on the word as he gasps for air.

His shoulder hits a spruce tree as he sprints through the snow, and though it aches at the impact, he doesn't stop.

Tears prick the corner of his eyes, near freezing on his skin after just a few moments. He just wants— he needs—

He wants the fear to end. He wants the pain to stop. He wants to go *home* but Dream blew it up, just like he did everything else Tommy has ever owned. Tommy belongs nowhere, and has no one. He is completely alone, just like Dream said, and no one is going to save him now.

The snow is turning pink beneath his feet, why is—?

He looks up, eyes wide as the red light of a double beacon shines through the forest, leaving a gruesome red glow between the shadows of the tree.

It looks terrifying— but Tommy's chest swells with hope.

The arctic commune. Phil lives there, Ranboo lives there. (Techno lives there.)

Except Ranboo is dead, isn't he? Tommy saw from afar as Sam plunged the sword into his chest, and he saw his ghost just a little while later.

They were all at the prison, just as Dream was escaping.

It rings alarms in his head, but still— they're his only hope.

*"PHIL!"* He screeches, hoping against hope that his cries aren't lost amidst the tree trunks.  
"PHIL HE'S GONNA KILL ME—"

"Tommy!" Dream yells behind him, as pain erupts across Tommy's side, and warmth soaks his shirt.

Howling. The wolves are howling. The scent of blood is on the air, and all Tommy hears is the wolves.

The fence is within sight, and Tommy stumbles through it, before stopping short just within its borders, eyes blown wide and fear spiking ever higher at the figure that greets him.

Technoblade stands just a few feet ahead, face hardened and cold, crossbow in hand— pointed directed at Tommy's face.

The air leaves his chest.

He's run from one enemy right to another. Techno won't spare him anymore than Dream.

“Techno,” He whimpers anyways, the snow melt clinging to his clothes sending terrible shivers down his spine.

Techno blinks, once, twice—

“Get down, Theseus.” He orders, short and plain.

Tommy doesn’t hesitate to drop to his knees, curling his head down into the snow as it begins to stain red around him.

The whistle of fireworks makes him shriek in terror, slamming his palms over his ears to drown out the noise.

It’s times like this that he finds himself praying. Prime has never answered his prayers, or spared him from hurt, but it’s an old habit, and he finds it hard to bury.

The snow around him begins to melt, sinking into his clothes and making the wind ever-sharper. Heat begins to roll across his back in waves, and Tommy peaks under his arms to try and find the source.

The forest is on fire.

Smoldering and smoking as evergreens fall to the fireworks shot from Techno’s crossbow.

“Where is it?” Techno asks suddenly, and Tommy snaps his head up to meet his narrowed, red eyes.

“...Huh?”

“The thing chasing you,” Techno elaborates, stepping around Tommy and closer to the treeline with a crunch of snow. The sway of his cape catches Tommy’s eyes for a moment as he stares blankly, mouth hanging open.

“...It’s not a mob.” He answers numbly, hardly registering the way Techno’s gaze snaps back to him. “It’s Dream.”

They stare at one another for a moment, both of their faces haloed by firelight. Tommy doesn’t know how it can burn so easily with all the snow.

Then Techno re-arms his crossbow, sliding another set of fireworks onto the mechanism. Tommy can’t help but shy back, kicking up more powdered snow as he flails through it. His eyes are wide with fear, unable to stop his mind from flashing back to the day he stood on the receiving end of the same weapon as L’Mamburg crumbled around him.

But Techno doesn’t point it at him this time— he aims it towards the forest once more.

“Come outta there so I can see you.” He demands, his rough voice easily heard over the crackle of woodfire.

A beat passes in silence as the snow begins to burn Tommy’s skin.

Techno’s lip curls as he glares into the trees. “I’ll burn the whole forest to the ground to find you, don’t try me.”

A movement among the spruce makes Tommy whimper, but neither of the other two spare him a glance— both distracted by each other.

“Hey Techno,” Dream hums easily as he crests a snowbank, the Axe of Peace resting on his shoulder nonchalantly. “Long time no see.” He jokes, a twisted smile just barely visible through the large cracks of his smiley mask.

Techno is silent, even as Tommy's chest hollows out.

Prime— he's so fucked. They're friends, buddies, old pals, *prison mates*. Techno was the one to break Dream out, no doubt about it.

And Techno doesn't care what Dream does to him. What he already has done, or what he will. It makes no difference to the piglin. He's shown that time and time again.

Techno is grinding his teeth, Tommy can tell by the way his jaw shifts, just like it does whenever Tommy's being too aggravating

"I was about to have myself a good sleep." Despite the comedic words, Techno's tone is anything but. He sounds *pissed*.

"By all means," Dream gestures. "Go right ahead. Just let me take Tommy, and I'll... keep him out of your hair."

The piglin bares his teeth, tail lashing beneath his cloak, and Dream goes still.

"You've just got your freedom back after *months*, and this is the first thing you do with it?" He snarls.

"He's the one who put me in there." Dream answers back, dangerously soft. The tone that he always had right before he snapped and gave Tommy a fresh bruise, or burn mark, or broken bone.

"I don't *care*." Technoblade growls. "*I* broke you out, I saved your skin... and you return the favor by *chasing him down*?"



“You say that like he means something to you.” Dream mocks.

The wind dies, as if the world itself holds its breath at those words. Tommy can’t tell what’s making his chest ache— the cold air, or the desperate longing for Techno to say, *He does mean something to me*. Or even: *He means everything to me*, family *means everything*.

And with every second that passes in which he doesn’t, something in Tommy crumbles.

He doesn’t understand why— he *knows* that they’ll never be friends again, never anything close to the fleeting imitation of a family they had together in this tundra. He knows, and still, fine-lined cracks are forming in his soul, as any hopes he’d unknowingly nursed are dashed away, and he curls into Techno’s shadow.

Techno breathes deeply— carefully.

“Do not presume to know what I value.”

Dream raises his chin, something dark in the way he lets the Axe of Peace slip off his shoulder and swing beside his leg in a loose grip.

“I thought you were better than this.” He begins.

Techno closes his eyes tiredly, beginning to shake his head. “Don’t start this again—”

“—*attachments*, are a weakness.” The masked man hisses, drawing a flinch from the blond.

“So you’ve told me.” Techno snaps back, letting his crossbow point at the ground as he takes another step forward. “I’ve heard this speech a million times in prison, Dream, and to be honest with you— I’m no more inclined to hear you out now any more than before.”

“There’s no point in defending *him*.” Dream points out bitingly. “He’s only ever been a burden to those around him– I know better than anyone.”

Techno grits his teeth at that, eyes narrowing at the escapee.

“...You have no attachments then?” He clarifies, in a low tone that Tommy is all too familiar with. That one that means: *Choose your next words carefully*. “...None at all?”

Dream hesitates, if only because of the tension in the air between them. “...That’s right.”

“Great...” Techno hums thoughtfully, raising his crossbow once more. “Then you’re not attached to *living*.”

Dream’s mouth parts– maybe in shock, or maybe he intended to say something. It doesn’t really matter, though, because Techno pulls the release on the crossbow, and the edge of the forest is once more lit up in a brilliant display of colors and fire.

Tommy doesn’t realize he’s screaming until the last of the fireworks die, leaving only the burning trees and marred snow where Dream had been standing moments ago.

His ears are ringing with the sound of the explosions, and his vision is blurred beyond clear sight.

The red figure moving to crouch in front of him only serves to make him more panicked. He flails back, throat going raw with overuse. The hands reaching for him don’t falter though, they approach steadily, resting on his shoulders as a warm, reassuring weight.

“–ommy, Tommy– *breathe* kid. C’mon, it’s alright, it’s okay. You’re safe now, I promise.”

A palm cradles his jaw, nearly burning against his frigid skin. It's rough and calloused, but just its existence makes the screams stutter in Tommy's chest, slowly dying out.

"Good." They praise, in a soft, gentle, murmur. Tommy leans towards the sound of it, wanting to get lost, to sink into it. "Good job, Theseus. Breathe, just like that."

He gulps in air, though it stings his airway to do so. The tundra is so cold, and the acrid smell of gunpowder makes his lungs protest.

"Shhh," The person says, and swipes the tears from his eyes before they can freeze. Tommy blinks, and he can see clearly now.

Technoblade.

His hero.

"There we go." Techno rumbles, the corner of his eyes crinkling ever so slightly. Few others would pick up on such a small thing, but Tommy knows him. Knows his mannerisms and tells.

"...Is- Is he dead?" Tommy manages to choke out with his broken voice.

Techno's expression flickers, his brows pinching together. "...No. I don't think so. He was in full netherite."

Tommy hates the way his lip trembles, but he nods anyways. It was a futile hope, to think he'd ever really escape Dream. He should be grateful no one else was killed with this attempt, like Ghostbur last time.

He wants to be strong, to stand up and brush off the snow, thank Techno for his help and leave before he can make the piglin regret his choice.

But it's so cold, and he's so tired. Of running, of the fear, of *dying*.

And Techno's skin is warm against his own. Tommy grabs his arm, holding his hand in place, because he'll probably be gone in a few moments, and he wants to savor the warmth and fleeting affection while he can.

Techno doesn't try to pull away though. Instead he raises his free hand and clasps it to the other side of Tommy's face.

The facade of strength shatters. A sob rips through him, as the piglin pulls him close, ringing out above the smoke and snow. He buries his face in the crook of Techno's neck, amongst the line of fur that peeks out beneath his cape. He's shaking— so hard that his teeth rattle in his head, and his wails waver.

“H-He was— he w-wanted to kill me— *again*. Over, and o-over, and—” He cuts himself off with another painful cry.

“I'll never let that happen.” Techno murmurs into his ear. “He won't touch you. Not today— not ever.”

Maybe if Tommy could believe him, the words would have held more comfort.

Techno rumbles, just like he always did to calm Tommy down. Even in pogtopia, when Wilbur yelled at him. Even after exile, when Tommy was a blithering, shattered, shell of himself. He pulls his cape around and over Tommy's bloodied and shaking form. All at once the cold of the tundra is gone.

But he can't help the sharp intake of breath when the heavy fur brushes against his back, and pain stabs through him.

He can't really remember when the injury occurred, but he has no doubt that Dream inflicted it as he chased Tommy all the way here, laughing as he did his best to hurt without killing him too quickly.

Techno stiffens at the sound he makes, and in the next moment he's pulling the teen into his arms, slipping an arm beneath his knees before standing up with Tommy held carefully against his chest.

Tommy does his best not to cry out as the wound is jostled. His adrenaline must be fading because everything *aches* in a bone-deep sort of way.

He doesn't realize Techno's carried him further into the commune until the warmth of a cabin washes over him. He shivers at the temperature change, squeezing his eyes shut as the door closes behind them, and the smell of fireworks is lessened.

Techno's hold on him shifts, and then he's being set down on his counter. Tommy whines as the cape is pulled off of him, but Techno doesn't say anything in response, only peers over the boy's shoulder to examine the wound on his back.

He curses under his breath, and Tommy tries not to flinch too much.

"I can't stitch this by myself, I'll need another set of hands." He says, stepping back. "I'm getting Phil— don't move. Got it?"

Tommy nods, curling his arms around himself as the piglin turns to the door again. He does flinch this time when the door slams shut, courtesy of the difference in temperature between the inside and outside.

He watches the door, waiting for Techno's return, and trying to build a wall in his mind to block out everything that's happened that day. He can't deal with it right now. He can't.

Something clunks on the lower floor, and he startles, heart beginning to pound in his chest once more.

There's someone in here.

Oh shit, oh fuck— It's *Dream*. They thought he retreated to the forest but he must've snuck in, probably stealing potions to heal himself and come back for Tommy—

The ladder creaks, and Tommy throws himself off the counter, scrambling against the walls as he crouches down. Where's— his box. His hidey hole. He needs it, where—?

The intruder reaches the second floor, and all Tommy can do is duck behind the table and chairs and pray that he won't be noticed.

“Hey, Techno I'm borrowing—” Their head rises as they stand to full height, and Tommy realizes it's not Dream.

Wilbur looks around, frowning. “I could've sworn—” He mutters to himself, before stopping short, his eyes catching on something to Tommy's left.

Shit.

Blood. There's blood on the counter, and smeared across the wall Tommy moved along.

He looks up again and finds himself staring right into the brown eyes as Wilbur's mouth parts with surprise.

“...What the fuck?”

Tommy gives no explanation as he moves further back, shoving himself into the corner beside the furnace.

Wilbur's face only crumples with more confusion. "What are you doing here—? Where did all the *blood* come from—"

Both of them jump out of their skins as the door slams open once more, Techno marching inside, closely followed by Philza. His eyes land on the empty counter first, and the piglin goes stiff, shoulders tensing as his eyes sweep across the room.

"Wil?" Phil says.

"...Hi?"

"Where is he?" Techno demands, tail lashing furiously, and Tommy wishes he'd just left when he had the chance. He doesn't want to see Techno angry.

Tommy freezes as Wilbur points silently at him, shoved into the corner like a cowering animal.

Techno immediately relaxes, pointed ears slumping from where they were pinned against his head. "What are you doin' over there?" He questions tiredly as he comes around the table, offering a hand out to pull Tommy from his corner.

"—'M sorry." Tommy gasps immediately as he takes the hand, fresh tears burning in his eyes. He scrubs them away before the others can see. He doesn't want them to think he's weak, least of all Wilbur fucking Soot. "I just— I thought— Dream—"

"Alright, alright. I understand. I'm not mad, kid." The piglin soothes, leading him gently towards the center of the room and pulling out a chair for him. "Sit here— wait, backwards, so we can look at this cut." Techno instructs.

Tommy does his best to comply, shakily settling on the chair and folding his arms on the back.

He cranes his neck to see what they do, shying back as Phil comes close.

“It’s alright, mate. I’m here to help.” Phil says softly. “I won’t hurt you.”

Tommy says nothing, but he stays still as he and Techno pull back the ripped edges of his shirt back from the wound. Phil hums thoughtfully, and murmurs to the other to get supplies.

“What the *fuck* is going on?” Wilbur demands, making Tommy jolt.

He fucking forgot the bitch was here.

“Wilbur,” Techno hisses scoldingly.

“What?” The brunet snaps back. “I come here to steal– I mean– *borrow* some beef, and I find blood smeared all over your cabin and *him* huddled in the corner.”

“Dream happened.” Techno answers shortly.

Tommy’s eyes flick between the floor and Wilbur’s face, desperate and yet simultaneously scared to know his reaction.

Wilbur's expression is blank– more confused than anything. “...Isn’t he in prison?”

Techno and Phil exchange uncomfortable looks at that.



“Uh– not anymore.” Phil admits lightly.

“Since when?”

“About two hours ago now.” Techno answers with a glance to the clock on the wall. The piglin sets some potions on the counter, along with bandages and spider silk for suturing. Tommy finds himself gnawing on his lip as he eyes the items. He’s gotten plenty of stitches in this lifetime– some, if not most by his own hand. He’s good with the pain that comes with them, but he’s still hesitant to let Techno do it.

Wilbur is silent as he pulls up a chair in front of Tommy, sitting in it backward as well so they’re facing each other. Tommy can’t read his expression, and his skin prickles as Wilbur stares at him.

“What are you looking at, bitch?” He does his best to growl– but his voice is nearly gone from all the screaming he’s done today, and it only makes Wilbur raise an eyebrow.

But he doesn’t answer. He just keeps staring.

Techno mutters something to him about cleaning the wound, and the process stinging, and Tommy’s attention is redirected.

He nods stiffly, shoulders tensing as they pour some kind of disinfectant over the slash.

Tommy can’t help it– he hisses at the burn.

He’s been through far worse. Explosions, burns, arrows to the chest, frostbite– he lost his *leg* for Prime’s sake. But his eyes are watering after just a little antiseptic. No wonder everyone treats him like a child.

A hand rests on his shoulder, rubbing a thumb across his skin soothingly. Tommy looks back and is surprised to find it's *Phil* of all people. He doesn't even know Tommy that well, he's just an old dude that he comes to for advice sometimes.

(He's also Wilbur and Techno's family, but that's besides the point.)

"Sorry about that mate. There was no skipping it, I'm afraid."

Tommy just blinks at him and lets his gaze drift away.

"Thread that needle for me, would you?" Phil asks Techno, while Tommy stares unblinkingly into the fireplace, and tries to ignore the weight of Wilbur's eyes.

A beat passes.

Techno mutters a curse under his breath.

"Phil." He whispers, and Tommy looks back again.

The piglin is holding out the needle and thread to Phil, face twisting in frustration. His hands are shaking.

The elder says nothing as he wipes his hands clean and takes them from Techno, nodding as Techno steps away. He threads the silk and then he's leaning over Tommy—

"Wait—" The teen stammers out. "I thought—" He looks to Techno.

The piglin grimaces. "I can't be the one to stitch you up." He says softly, clasping his hands together in a futile effort to stop the tremor. "Too— too much adrenaline." He says thickly.

“Phil’s very good at patching people up.” Wilbur offers. “Probably better at it than Techno.” He adds just a tad softer.

Techno huffs. “Shut up, Wil.”

Tommy swallows thickly, wrapping his fingers around the bars of the chair as he looks forward again. More often or not, things happen to him, regardless of if he actually wants them to. This is just another instance of that.

“Is that alright with you?” Phil asks anyways.

Techno is standing at Tommy’s side, and the boy’s eyes flick up to meet his briefly. There’s concern in his gaze, and his tail is curling the way it does when he’s anxious. He wants Tommy to say yes.

“...Course, Big Man.” Tommy answers with false bravado.

He still flinches at the first stitch.

It hurts. Everything hurts, actually. Every inch of his skin feels fiery, and the tips of his ears ache, reminding him of the frostbite they once had.

He grits his teeth and buries his head into his arms so that no one will see if he tears up.

After a particularly sharp tug, he inhales sharply, and knows that the others would have easily heard it.

That doesn’t mean he was expecting for someone to take his hand.

His head snaps up as he stares at Wilbur with wide eyes, the brunet stilling for a moment before squeezing his hand.

“What are you doing?” Tommy demands.

“...Holding your hand?” Wilbur answers lamely, as though he’s unsure.

“Why?” The boy presses.

Wilbur only shrugs, putting other hand over top, so Tommy skin is warmed between his palms. “I think it's supposed to make you feel better.” He says with a hint of dryness to his tone.

Tommy doesn’t really know what to say to that. Wilbur has never cared about *making him feel better*.

The shock of it all distracts him though. He watches with glazed eyes as Wilbur smooths his thumb along Tommy’s marred skin, brushing along the scars carefully, tracing them like constellations on an astrology map. He forces down the shudder that crawls up his spine when the man circles the bone of his wrist that juts out.

It's...he doesn’t know what it is, actually. Part of him wants to think that it’s nice, but a larger part is waiting for the catch, waiting for the nice touch to turn bruising, waiting for the yelling to start.

It doesn’t. Time passes peacefully, as Techno helps Phil, and Tommy’s back is slowly stitched together.

“Alright,” Phil sighs as he ties the last stitch. “That’s the last– Wilbur?” He questions suddenly, snapping Tommy from his stupor.

He looks up to find nothing short of pure fury scrawled across Wilbur's face, and he pulls his hand back with a jolt of fear.

The brunet almost reaches after it, but he stops himself.

And then Tommy notices the way his eyes shine in the light.

"I- I don't understand." He grits out, dark eyes raising to look at the others. "It- wasn't like this when I left-" He looks to Tommy. "*You* weren't like this!" He gestures to the scars.

Techno's places a hand on the man's shoulder and pulls him gently from the seat as he continues to speak.

"You're- you're telling me *Dream* did this? That- that doesn't make sense- *Dream saved* me, he brought me back, he brought *Tommy* back-!" He says to Techno, desperation leaking into his voice.

"C'mon." Techno orders, his expression steely as he steers Wilbur towards the door.

"I-"

That's all Wilbur manages before they step outside and Techno shuts the door behind him, Tommy staring after them.

"Well..." Phil breathes, and Tommy stiffens. "...Let's get you bandaged up while they talk." He says, all too cheerfully for the atmosphere.

Tommy lets him peel what remains of his shirt away so the can wrap clean bandages around his torso.

“...What are they talking about?” Tommys asks hoarsely while Phil methodically winds the white fabric around his back and chest.

The avian purses his lips together, avoiding Tommy’s eyes.

“...Wilbur thinks very highly of Dream...” He begins slowly.

Tommy can’t help but snort. “Yeah, I’m aware of that. I’ve listened to him yammer on about the guy enough.”

Phil gives a low hum. “...But you never told him about your history?”

The boy’s eyes narrow at that. “...What do you know about *our history*?”

“Only what Techno has told me...and what I gathered from the few times you’ve spoken to me.”

They stare at one another for a moment longer, the air heavy with tension. Then Phil turns, his wings catching the torchlight like oil, “I’ll find you something to change into. You’re welcome to sit on the couch.” He offers, as though it’s his house and not Technoblade’s.

Tommy watches him go, then eyes the door for a moment. When Wil and Techno don’t reappear he begrudgingly stands from the kitchen chair. His one good leg immediately gives out, and he curses as he manages to catch himself from smashing his face into the floor.

Grumbling he half-crawls, half-drags himself the rest of the way to the couch. He gives himself a moment to rest before finally glaring at the iron and oak prosthetic attached to his leg just below the knee.

It's the one Tubbo made for him after his original one was too damaged from Doomsday.

He fucken hates it though.

Well, not really, but he hates that he needs a prosthetic at all.

He gets to work unbuckling the clasps of the leather straps that keep the thing attached to him, before letting it fall to the ground with a thunk.

"What was that?" Phil asks as he reenters the room, feathers bristling.

Tommy's eyes flick from the discarded foot to Phil. "...I dropped something."

Phil steps closer, and stops short, blinking down at the prosthetic. "...Ah."

Tommy huff, and extends a hand for the sweater that the man brought back with him.

"Right— here ya' go, mate." Phil says, passing over the bundle of fabric.

Tommy gets to work pulling it over his head, and freezes when warm hands carefully help him tug it over the bandages without getting caught on anything. When his head is finally through the neck hole, Tommy stares up at the guy, arms still frozen over his head.

Phil snickers, and reaches a hand out to brush down the boy's ruffled hair. "Your hair looks funny when it sticks up like that. Did it always have that strip of white?"

Tommy stiffens, eyes dropping to the ground as he curls in on himself. "No..."

Phil only hums at that, before dropping onto the couch beside Tommy. The teen stares at him, entirely thrown off by his ease.

“You should get some rest.” The older blond tells him softly, pulling a quilt off the back of the couch. “You need it to heal. We won’t be able to give you any potions until you get your strength up.”

Tommy might have protested, or said he had to go home, but Phil gently curls his hand around the nape of his neck, guiding him down until he’s laying flat, head pillowed on the avian's leg. He’s stiff as a blaze rod while the man maneuvers the quilt over him, before finally settling with his good wing tented over Tommy’s head.

He flinches when Phil smooths his hair back. “Shhh, it’s alright mate. You’re safe. Go to sleep, alright? I’ll watch over you.”

Tommy makes an uncertain noise, but Phil begins tracing a line from his hairline down to the soft hairs at the base of his skull, and the repetitiveness of it is soothing. He’s finally warm, and though his back throbs, it’s getting better now that he’s not moving. Exhaustion is creeping up on him, and there’s not even a trace of adrenaline in his system to keep him going. The crash was inevitable.

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He wakes up only briefly, late into the night.

“—want him dead.” Someone hisses, and it takes everything in him not to freeze. He keeps his breathing steady, dreading the moment someone realizes he’s awake.

His head is still on Phil’s lap, and the man’s hand rests on the side of his head. When he speaks, it radiates from the chest above Tommy’s ear.

“We all do mate.”



“That’s not the question.” Techno agrees from somewhere nearby.

Well then. Tommy only hopes that when they kill him, he’s asleep.

But why would they go to the trouble of stitching him up? Of saving him in the first place?  
That doesn’t make *sense*—

“But Ranboo is dead. And he’s the only hope we have to bring him back.” Techno sighs.

Oh.

They’re not talking about him.

They’re talking about *Dream*.

Which only makes a little more sense. Not much, though.

The room is silent for a beat.

“Either way, we have to track him down.” Wilbur points out.

“Easier said than done.” Phil huffs. “The last trace of him likely burned down with the rest of Her Forest.” He says the last part pointedly.

“...Oops?”

Another pause.

The room is filled with quiet laughter.

“Shhh!” Phil hisses, though he’s laughing too. “You two are going to wake him up.”

The laughing fades, and Wilbur gives a thoughtful hum. A new hand brushes a lock of hair out of Tommy’s face.

“...He looks so young when he’s asleep.” The brunet murmurs, and his tone makes Tommy’s heart twist.

It’s reminiscent of something fond— something he hasn’t heard from Wilbur in so long that he forgot what it sounded like. It makes him ache. He wants this dream to be real. He wants it more than anything.

“Because he is young.” Phil murmurs softly, tracing a finger along the shell of Tommy’s ear. “I think you two forgot that at some point. I think this whole server did.”

The room is filled only with the sound of the fire crackling in the furnace.

Someone takes his hand again, though this time he lets it lay limp in their grasp. Their skin is cool, like Tommy’s. A temperature only common in those once dead.

Wilbur.

“It’s okay, Wil.” Phil consoles. “You’ll get your chance to say sorry.”

A snuffle. “He won’t forgive me though. He *shouldn’t*.”

“You can’t make him forgive you. That’s up to him. All you can do is be better.”

They all go quiet then. Minutes pass, and Tommy continues to lie still, breathing deeply and soaking up the warmth of Phil’s hand before the avian finds something better to do with his time.

A snore starts up, softly at first, but quickly loud enough for someone to start snickering.

“Someone’s had a busy day.” Techno whispers.

“We all have.” Phil agrees. “Come lay down, you should sleep too.”

Techno hums, and the air shifts as he moves, and a new weight settles on the other end of the couch, near Tommy’s feet. He rests a hand on the teen’s ankle, as though he needs reassurance that he’s there.

Only after a few more minutes have passed in silence, and Techno begins snoring loudly enough to rival Wilbur, does Tommy finally open his eyes.

Wilbur is propped up against the couch, his fingers still intertwined with Tommy’s as he sleeps with his face smushed against the cushions. The room is dark, save for the light of the dying fire, but Tommy doesn’t need to look to know the others are all sleeping. Here, beside him instead of their own beds that would surely be more comfortable.

The panicked creature that’s been clawing at the walls of his ribcage for what feels like hours finally settles down. They don’t want him dead. They want him here, *safe*.

Tommy closes his eyes again and sleeps.

## End Notes

I miss them all together

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